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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3696  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6197  
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 0705  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 1625  
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 5595  
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU 9886  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 7429

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DEPT FOR AIT/W, EAP/TC, INR/EAP

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Profile of New Kaohsiung Mayor - Chen Chu

Ref: A) 2005 Taipei 3525 B) 2006 Taipei 4152

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¶1. (U) Summary: Kaohsiung City Mayor Chen Chu was sworn in December 25, 2006. During her inaugural address, she pledged that she and her administration would focus on boosting Kaohsiung City's economic development to create job opportunities for young people, emphasizing that she would keep her administration clean and her policy-making transparent. End Summary.

#### Chen Chu Biography

¶2. (U) A native of I-Lan County, Chen Chu was one of the ten founders of the Democratic Progress Party (DPP) when it was established in 1986.

DOB: June 1, 1950

Education: B.A. in Library and Information Studies from  
Shih Hsin University and Master in Public Affairs  
Administration from National Sun-Yat-Sen University

#### Previous Positions:

- a. Chairperson of Council of Labor Affairs, Executive Yuan (2000-2005)
- b. Director of Social Affairs Bureau, Kaohsiung Municipal Government (1998-2000)
- c. Director of Social Affairs Bureau, Taipei Municipal Government (1994-1998)
- d. National Assembly Member (1991-1993)
- e. Director and Secretary General of Taiwan Human Right Promotion Association (1986-1990)

¶3. (U) Chen has been a promoter of social rights since she was 19 years old. She started her social activist career as an assistant to Kuo Yu-hsing, a well-known 1970's political activist, who was a friend of her father. She was serving as the Deputy Director of the Formosa Magazine's Kaohsiung Branch Office when the Formosa Incident happened in December 1979. After the incident, she was sentenced to six years and two months in jail, at which time she became friends with now Vice President Annette Lu. After being released in 1986, she continued to promote human rights, placing particular emphasis on women's rights.

¶4. (U) Chen Chu is a member of the DPP's New Tide faction. She became an elected official when she won a seat in Kaohsiung City as a National Assembly member in 1991. She then served as the Director of the Taipei Social Affairs Bureau when Chen Shui-bian was a Mayor of Taipei in 1994. When Frank Hsieh served as the Mayor of Kaohsiung City, she was appointed to the Director of Kaohsiung City

Social Affairs Bureau in 1998. In 2000, when the DPP won the presidency and became the ruling party, she was appointed as the Chairperson of the Council of Labor Affairs. After the Thai laborers' riot (ref A) occurred in August 2005 at the Kaohsiung Rapid Transit Corporation (KRTC) project, she resigned from her position to take responsibility for the incident and subsequently returned to Kaohsiung to start preparing the ground to run for Kaohsiung Mayor, a job to which she had been aspiring for some time.

Because of her eloquence and heartfelt speeches, she has been a master of ceremonies at many DPP election campaign rallies, including the presidential elections rallies. These experiences have made her an excellent campaigner and contributed to her win in the Kaohsiung mayoral election. She has a nephew, Lee Kun-tze, who was elected as a Legislator in 2004 in Kaohsiung City.

#### Chen's Associates

15. (SBU) The unsuccessful KMT mayoral candidate Huang Chun-ying was Chen's professor when she studied for her master's degree at National Sun-Yat-Sen University. Because of this teacher-student relationship, the campaigning of the DPP in the mayoral election was not as negative and harsh as usual, even though it was still a tense mayoral election. Chen Chu told AIT/Kaohsiung several times that KMT mayoral candidate Huang Chung-ying was a mild and nice person and they would not attack each other personally.

16. (SBU) Chen has previously been associated with former DPP Chairman Shih Ming-te, the recent leader of the anti-President Chen movement. Their relationship traces back to the 1970's and the founding of Formosa Magazine. She said that she and Shih were just like "brother and sister" and Shih had taken care of her since the Formosa incident. Therefore, when Shih started the anti-Chen movement, she did not criticize Shih but called on DPP supporters to

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understand and tolerate Shih's ideas although she did not approve his actions.

#### New Administration

16. (U) After Mayor Chen's inauguration, she changed only one third of her staff - i.e., one Vice Mayor, and the Directors of the Information Bureau, Social Affairs Bureau, Mayor's Office, Civil Affairs Bureau and Military Conscription Department. The new Director of the Mayor's Office stated that Chen will review her decisions on key slots after three months and then make adjustments if necessary.

17. (U) Based on her previous labor-related work experience, Chen launched her mayoral tenure by checking on laborer safety in Kaohsiung. On January 8, Chen made an unannounced safety check on the construction of the Kaohsiung Mass Rapid Transit (KMRT) system. During her visit to the KMRT site at the Kaohsiung Rail Station, Chen instructed the Labor Safety Investigation Office to intensify its investigations to ensure the safety of laborers at all major KMRT construction sites.

#### COMMENT

18. (SBU) Mayor Chen won the election by only 1114 votes and is now facing a lawsuit (ref B) by KMT mayoral candidate Huang Chun-ying aimed at nullifying the election. Her strategy at the moment is to keep a low profile and allow the legal process to take its course. Figuring out ways to boost the economy of Kaohsiung City will be her main task because it was her major election pledge, and both the people and business circles in Kaohsiung have high expectations in this area.

THIELE

YOUNG